(c) and (d) The recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission relating to article 356 of the Constitution of India were not included in the agenda for the meeting of the Standing Committee held on 4th April, 2000 and were, as such, not discussed on that day. However, article 356 has been a subject matter of discussion in the earlier meetings of the Standing Committee and the Inter-State Council. In the sixth meeting of the Standing Committee held on 19th December, 1998 the subject was remitted to a Sub-Committee consisting of the Chief Ministers of Uttar Pradesh, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh and Finance Minister of West Bengal under the Convenorship of the Union Defence Minister. The matter was also discussed in the fifth meeting of the Inter- State Council held on 22nd January, 1999 in which it was decided that the Sub-Committee under the Convenorship of the Union Defence Minister should continue deliberations to evolve a consensus. The Inter- State Council is yet to take a final view in the matter.

Private coal mines

*627. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the reason that the coal mines were required to be privatised when it was nationalised from the hands of private owners in 1969; and

(b) in how many countries the coal mines are allowed to be in the private ownership giving the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF POWER AND MINISTER OF MINES AND MINERALS (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) The private coal mines of India were nationalised during 1971—73 and not in 1969. There is no proposal with the Government for privatisation of the existing coal mines of Coal India Limited (CIL) and Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL). The Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Amendment Bill, 2000 has been introduced in the Rajya Sabha to make amendments to the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 to allow the Indian companies to be engaged in non-captive coal mining in the new blocks of coal and lignite and also to engage them in exploration of coal and lignite resources. The amendments are necessary for augmentation of coal production in the country in order to bridge the gap between the demand and supply of coal at the end of X and XI Plan periods.

(b) Except in Peoples Republic of China, Russia and Poland, the coal mines in other coal producing countries namely Australia, South Africa, United States of America, United Kingdom, Columbia and Indonesia are mostly under private ownership. Even in Peoples Republic of China, a decision has been taken to adopt foreign investment for formulation of joint venture companies

or cooperative joint venture companies. In Russia also, market reforms are being introduced in order to attract foreign investment. On Poland, major reforms are going on so that the coal industry becomes market-driven through economic liberalisation mechanisms.

Suicide Bombers in J and K

*628. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that suicide bombers are the new phenomenon of militancy in J and K; and

(b) if so, what steps are contemplated to nip in the bud this menace before its number escalates?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) Pak sponsored terrorists have resorted to another method of attack on the security forces with a view to gaining attention. A car bomb with a terrorist at the wheels exploded in the Badami Bagh Cantonment, Srinagar on 19.4.2000 leading to blowing up of the terrorist and causing minor injuries to 5 security personnel. This shows the utter frustration on the part of terrorists in gaining a upper hand with the security forces.

(b) The security and intelligence agencies are fully vigilant and they are on maximum alert to frustrate the designs of the Pak sponsored terrorists organisations including suicide attacks. Steps taken to tackle terrorist related actions in J and K include, round the clock vigil on border, posting additional naka parties manned by Army / BSF / Police in depth areas to check infiltration / exfiltration, establishment of pickets at all strategically important place, intensified patrolling of sensitive areas and intelligence supported cardon and search operations.

Influx of persons of foreign origin

*629. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that there is unabated influx of Bangladeshis, Talibanese and other persons of foreign origin in several parts of the country;

(b) whether the State Governments or the Central Government have totally failed to keep a close watch on them;

(c) whether such illegal immigrants are creating several problems which are affecting the economy of the country; and